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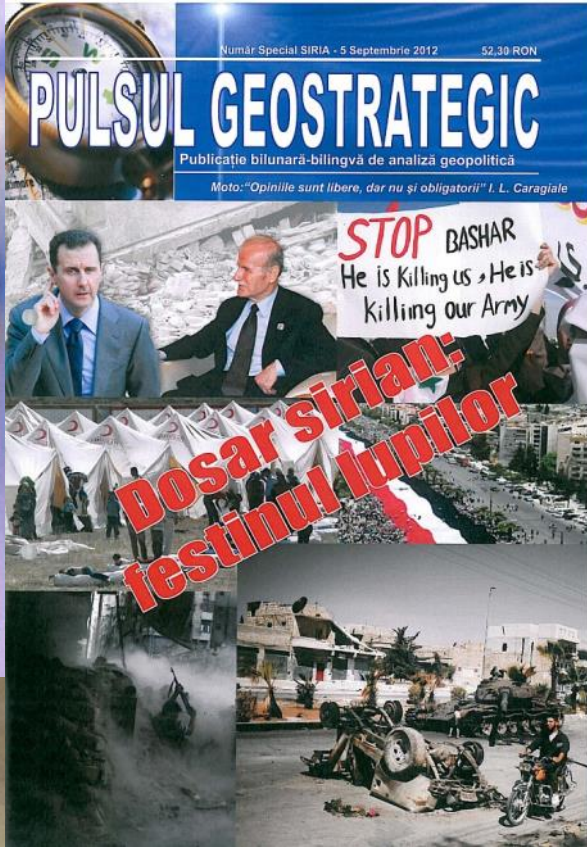
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TURKEY – EU: Waiting for Godot

Aaron DENISON



Turkey has been applying for the EU membership since 1987 when Turgut Ozal, the 8th President of Turkey submitted an application. But until today, they have failed to convince the EU as well as the EU member states that they are fit to be a part of the European community via the EU. There are many factors that might have contributed to the failure of Turkey's application. One of the factors that has been heavily debated is on the historical perspectives based on the culture and identity. The European identity is one of the core importance in discussing about EU membership or enlargement process. The question that is being asked here is whether Turkey has that European identity within their country. In addition if we look at the history of Europe's relation with the Ottoman Empire in the past would also be a deciding factor too as some Europeans would remember the shadows of conflict between both sides back in the day. The Ottoman Empire and its Muslim identity as well as the Christian Europe might have also shaped the minds of Europeans when Turkey applied for EU membership (Multuler & Taskin, 2007)

“While the cacophony of European contradictions works towards a self-elimination of the EU from the MENA/Euro-Med region, Turkey tries to reinsert itself. The so-called *neo-Ottomanism* of the current government is steering the country right into the centre of grand bargaining for both Russia and for the US. To this emerging triangular constellation, ambitious and bold PM Erdoğan wishes to beat his own drum. ... Past the *Arab Spring*, Turkey wakes up to itself as the empiric proof that Islam and modernity work together. In fact, it is the last European nation that still has both demographic and economic growth. ... Moreover, Atatürk's Republic is by large and by far the world's most successful Muslim state: It was never resting its development on oil or other primary-commodity exports, but on a vibrant socio-economic sector and solid democratic institutions. ... The very outcome will be felt significantly beyond the Arab region and will reverberate all across the Sunni Muslim world. (Bajrektarevic, Anis, 2016)

Besides the factor of history, culture and identity there were also war and human rights issues that hindered Turkey's application to the EU. Turkey got involved in a bloody Kurdish revolution in South-East Anatolia during the mid-1980s. Turkey was accused of abusing human rights as well as persecuting the minorities during the revolution. Turkey's failure to improve human rights and the rights of minorities made it difficult for them to be accepted into the EU. In addition, the EU also raised doubts about Turkey's ability in implementing the necessary social, political and economic adjustments needed to enter the EU. This was mentioned by the EU back in the 1990s but until today these issues still exist in Turkey. Government-led restrictions on media freedom and freedom of expression in 2015 went hand in- and with efforts to discredit the political opposition and prevent scrutiny of government policies in the run-up to the two general elections (Human Rights Watch,

2015). Recently, President Tayyip Erdogan has been arresting political activists, journalists and other critical of public officials since the attempted military coup happened in 15th July 2016. (Amnesty International, 2016). These are all the issues that has definitely contributed and effected Turkey's EU membership application.



Another factor that has contributed to the failure of Turkey's EU membership application is the fact that they currently occupy the northern part of Cyprus till this day. The issue of Cyprus and Turkey became significant when Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 in retaliation to Greece that had already occupied Cyprus since 1964 (Fitzgerald, 2009). At present, the Turkish troops occupy the northern part of Cyprus whereas the southern part of Cyprus is currently independent and has its own government. The connection between the Cyprus issue and the membership of Turkey into the EU became noticeable when Cyprus and Turkey both became candidates for EU membership and it was announced at the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Both countries were destined to join the European Union and at that time, it was confirmed that the situation in Cyprus was not involved in the decision making for the candidature. There were not precondition that was mentioned. But it was important for Turkey to play an active and important role in bringing about a settlement in Cyprus.

But on 1st May 2004, Cyprus was accepted as an EU member state and Turkey remained on the sidelines. The membership of Cyprus in the EU has made in even difficult for Turkey to become a member and it constitutes an important obstacle for EU accession of Turkey. This is because Turkey cannot become a member of the EU without recognizing the Republic of Cyprus. Since it joining the EU, Cyprus has used its veto to prevent the EU from passing the so-called direct trade regulation needed to lift tariffs on good from Northern Cyprus. (Barysch, 2010). In addition, Cyprus as a member of the EU has also used its veto to block Turkey's negotiations on accession with the European Union (Kambas, 2015). Cyprus have also said that it will not end its veto for the time being. These shows that the Cyprus issue is definitely one of the stumbling blocks for Turkey to strike any sort of deal with the EU and this deal includes their EU membership application.

Is the Cyprus issue one of the crucial factors that is currently effecting Turkey's membership application after it became an EU member state in 2004. The first part of the paper will discuss about the Cyprus issue before it became an EU member state whether there were also other factors that affected Turkey's membership application. The first part will discuss a little about history and then move on to Cyprus issue from 1974 until 2004. The second part will discuss about the Cyprus issue after it became an EU member state in 2004 where it seems that the Cyprus issue was definitely a very crucial factor that is currently affecting Turkey's membership application.

GREEK AND TURKISH INTERVENTION IN 1974

Cyprus became an independent nation in 1960 after both the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots agreed to sign the London-Zurich Agreement (BBC News, 2016). The agreement guaranteed the right of the Turkish minorities that were around 18% of the population as well as the rights of the Greek majority which comprised around 80% of the population at that time. Prior to that, both the Greeks and Turkish Cypriots had demanded the British to give them independence. While Cyprus was already an independent country, their first President of Cyprus Archbishop Makarios said to have proposed constitutional changes called the Akritas Plan that would abolish power sharing in Cyprus and at the same suppress Turkish Cypriots. (Ellis, 2010). There were also sources that said Deputy President of Cyprus and also Turkish Cypriot Community Leader, Fazil Kutchuk wanted to break away from the state and set up a separate administration with the help of Turkey (Charalambous, 2014). These led to communal violence and Turkey withdrawal from power sharing. There were already problems that were happening internally in Cyprus as both the leaders of Greek and Turkish Cypriots had a feud over the constitution and there was an ethnic divide.

The situation in the Republic of Cyprus became worst in July 1974 when there was an intervention by Greece when they overthrew ruling government of President Archbishop Makarios in Republic of Cyprus (Nugent, 1999). The military coup was led by Nikos Sampson who had had the support of the military regime in Greece as they wanted a union (enosis) to be achieved between

Cyprus and Greece (Smith, 2014). Supporters of President Makarios rejected the idea of union (enosis) as they wanted to be an independent nation. In the same month and year, Turkey also intervened in Republic of Cyprus with operation Atilla. Their reason for intervening is to protect the rights to the Turkish Cypriots (Hislop, 2014). Both coups resulted in a civil war that broke out between both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots with the help of both countries as well. The coup by Greece collapsed and the war had ended in August 1974 as the Turkish military were able to capture one-third of the island and it was in the northern part of Republic of Cyprus. They had occupied Famagusta and the Karpas Peninsula. The intervention in 1974 forced a partition as the island was separated along the Green Line that was already in place since 1963 as it was drawn up by the UN forces due to the ongoing domestic conflicts (Fitzgerald, 2009). Greek Cypriots living in the north were forced out to the south and vice versa for the Turkish Cypriots living in the south when they fled to the north. Republic of Cyprus was now divided into two states

THE DIVIDED CYPRUS

Up till today, Republic of Cyprus is divided into two states. The UN Security Council has warned the Turkey to withdraw its troops but they have failed to do so. There are almost 35,000 Turkish troops stationed in the Northern Cyprus (Nugent, 1999). Immediately after the war, Turkish Cypriots established an independent administration. There was an effort for peace talks between both north and south Cyprus but it collapsed and as a result of that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was formed in 1983. The southern Cyprus was known as The Republic of Cyprus (ROC). The Turkish Republic of Northern Cy-

prus (TRNC) is only recognized by Turkey and it not recognized internationally by the UN whereas the Republic of Cyprus is recognized internationally by the UN and not by Turkey (Comfort, 2005). This means that the northern Cyprus depends wholly on Turkey for survival as it does not have ties internationally. Northern Cyprus has so far maintained its existence and rebuffed all attempts by the



world body to submit to the current Cyprus government in the south. (Bhutta, 2016). They believed that they are an independent nation of their own. The Green Line which was supposed to be a temporary ceasefire has not become permanent. People from both sides are not allowed to communicate with each other although they have been effort to change this when the Turkish Cypriots opened the barricades along the Green Line for visitors on both sides of the divide. (Hislop, 2014).

A divided Cyprus has definitely made things more complicated between the two sections of the country as well as the relationship between Turkey and Republic of Cyprus (southern Cyprus). The Republic of Cyprus feels that stationed troops in northern Cyprus is definitely seen as a threat and an occupying force. (Comfort, 2005).

THE CYPRUS EFFECT ON TURKEY'S EU MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION UNTIL THE YEAR 1990

Turkey started to eye the EU membership for many decades since it was named as the European Community (EC) back then. Turkey's official membership application was in 1959 when it applied to become a member of the European Community (EC). The application was rewarded with the Ankara Agreement which was signed by both Turkey and the EU in 1963. (Gerhards & Hans, 2011). The Ankara Agreement was not an agreement that guaranteed full membership yet but it was the first step towards full membership in the future. The Ankara Agreement signed in 1963 was limited to only trade and financial matters. In 1970, there was another milestone in the application when both Turkey and the EU signed the 1970 Additional Protocol establishing a 22 year transnational period leading to customs union (EUEC, 2008). Although protocol was signed, Turkey strategy for economic development was not in line with EC and there was going to a re-negotiation on the deal was signed. At an early stage, Turkey EU membership application was more towards dealing between only the EU and Turkey. There were obvious third party that was involved in making sure that negotiations failed. Turkey's initial membership application was not yet effected by the Cyprus issue.

The interventions in Cyprus by Greece and Turkey definitely impacted Turkey's quest for the EC membership. After 1974, it could be said that the EC took a very careful approach in identifying Turkey as a possible candidate for the EC. The division of Cyprus definitely had

an effect on Turkey's membership application. Besides the Cyprus factor, there were also other strong factors that affected the relationship between the EC and Turkey. Both parties had a rough relationship because of the domestic politics in Turkey at that time. Unfavorable domestic political developments in Turkey and most importantly the military coup that happened on 12 September

1980 made Turkey's possible EC membership totally irrelevant (Grigoriadis, 2003). During this period, Turkey isolated themselves from EU until the civilian government took power in 1983.

There was also another important factor that was effected Turkey's EU membership application during this time. In 1981, while Turkey was in isolation due to its domestic problems, Greece became an official EU member. This basically meant that as an EU member Greece had veto powers to indirectly stop Turkey from becoming an EU member at that time. As an EU member, Greece was always able to affect EU policies on its benefits with respect to Turkey as well as the

Cyprus issue (Basturk, 2013). In addition, Greece's ascension as the EU member at that time had given Greece the ultimate opportunity to point the finger at Turkey of being an invader in relation to the Cyprus issue which was a breach of the idea of an 'European' identity which was based the values of peace and democracy. (Ulusoy, 2009). Despite of all these factors, Turkey applied for full EU membership in 1987 but as expected the EU felt that Turkey was not ready for the membership. In December 1989 the EU decided that it will not accept any members at that moment of time. In terms of Turkey application, the EU said to have had concerns about developmental gap between the EU and Turkey which meant that Turkey could not fulfil its obligations of developing from the EU economic and social policies (Grigoriadis, 2003). In addition to the mentioned reason, the EU also referred to Turkey's ongoing disagreements with Greece as well as the Cyprus issue. Besides that, the EU was also referring to the fact that the human rights issue and treatment of the minorities in Turkey would still need improvement (Hale, 2000). Thus for this reasons Turkey's EU membership application in 1987 was rejected by the EU.

It could be said that at this point of time the influence of Greece in the EU could be seen as even more vital factor than the Cyprus issue itself. This is because the issue related to Cyprus was initially being strongly voiced out by Greece rather than the EU. We could analyze that after Greece's ascension into the EU in 1981, the voice on the Cyprus issue by Greece became more vocal thus it definitely affected Turkey's EU membership application. The Greek policy towards Turkey's membership was always portrayed as a crucial factor for the lack of progress in the EUTurkey relations. In the minds of many Turkish citizens, Greece was the only obstacle to the accession of their country into the EU although Turkey was not eligible yet for the membership during the 1980s and 1990s (Georgiades, 2000). But by looking at it on a different angle, it could also be said that Turkey's domestic politics also played a major role in their membership application. The military regime in Turkey during their isolation between 1980-1983 gave the window of opportunity for Greece to become an EU member and influence the EU in some way.

The situation might have been a little different if Turkey did not isolate themselves. They might have influenced the EU too in making sure that Greece was not a member of the EU. Although it seems that the Cyprus issue played a major role in Turkey EU membership application, but it can be argued that it played an indirectly role altogether as the ascension

of Greece into the EU and Turkey domestic politics played a more crucial role during this period of time until 1990 that ultimately affected Turkish EU membership application.

THE CYPRUS EFFECT A NON CRUCIAL FACTOR BETWEEN 1990 TO 2004

Turkey EC membership application seemed to have hit a new blow when Republic of Cyprus applied to become the member of the EU as well in 1990. The application by EU definitely shocked the Turkey and northern Cyprus. Turkey feared that they would face another obstacle if Republic of Cyprus became an EU member. Turkey insisted that the application should not be allowed by the EU as it is against the International Law and the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey received advice from international law experts. Article 8 of the Republic of Cyprus states that Republic of Cyprus cannot be a member of an international organization unless both Turkey and Greece are a member of it too (Mandelson, 1997). But this failed to convince the

EC as they thought that the issue of Cyprus' accession is an eminently political debate and law can adapt itself to any political solution. But looking at it from another point of view, Turkey as also not abiding by the law as they were not following the European Court of Human Rights by not respecting the property rights of the Greek Cypriots in northern Cyprus (Suvarierol, 2003). It could be seen that Turkey one way or another was practicing double standard.

But looking at it clearly, the Cyprus issue was again not the crucial point here that was hindering Turkey's EU membership application. The collapse of the communism in 1992 definitely had an impact on Turkey's membership (EUEC, 2008). The communist bloc of the Soviet Union ended hence granting opportunity for the EU to establish a European bloc



within the Central and Western European countries. In addition to that also, the countries that were finally released of communism were also performing poorly in terms of economy hence it needed all the help they could get from the European community via the EU. These countries were also given priorities because they were seemed to more culturally part of Europe than Turkey. This resulted in the prioritization of the Central and Western European countries as member states and Turkey fell down the picking order.

Besides the fall of the communist bloc, continuous pressure from Greece also contributed to Turkey's EU membership application. The Copenhagen Criteria which was discussed in 1993 became Greece's attack on Turkey. Greece used it as a tool to point fingers at Turkey. Greece criticized Turkey's miserable human and minority rights record as well as their military influenced democracy. (Grigoriadis, 2003) Turkey who initially failed to meet the political criteria choose to then focus on the economic criteria. The EU gave priority to Turkey to complete the negotiations of the EU-Turkey customs union. But Greece again showed their influence when they used their veto policy to block the customs union agreement between Turkey and the EU (Grigoriadis. 2003). Greece seemed to be using the veto for its own national interest but they were not going to be convinced easily. Besides that, Greece were also very influential in making sure that Cyprus became one of the candidates that would join the EU. The deal was that Greece would lift its veto over Turkey's customs union with the EU in return for the EU's agreement to start accession talks with the Greek Cypriots on behalf of the whole island of Cyprus (Oguzlu, 2002). Turkey's customs union agreement came into force in January 1996 (EUEC, 2008) after Greece lifted its veto on the customs union in March 1995 (Suvarierol, 2003). Greece was influential once again when the 1999 Helsinki Summit finally granted candidateship to Turkey. This is because there was a precondition where Turkey would need to resolve their issue with Greece before starting EU membership negotiation (Oguzlu, 2002). In the same summit, Cyprus was also given candidateship without any pre-condition on their internal issue. The EU Accession Partnership Document for Turkey was publicized by the European Commission in November 2000. Once again Greece stood in the way of Turkey's EU membership as they continued to pursue their agenda when they persuaded 14 fellow EU members to add another condition to the EU Accession Partnership Document by adding that Turkey should also resolve the Cyprus issue before negotiating EU membership (Franz, 2000). This generally shows that the Cyprus issue was again only an indirect factor to Turkey's EU Membership because Greece were making all the important decisions directly. They did not only use the Cyprus issue as tool but also managed to influence other members states as well to make sure that Turkey was unsuccessful in their membership application.

It is not fair also to point fingers only at Greece because there were other EU member states too that did not want Turkey to become an EU member. German Foreign Minister at that time had an opinion that Turkey still have a long way but are already in line to be in EU but they were still lacking behind in terms of human rights referring to the Kurdish situation and also stressed about

Turkey's relationship with Greece and Cyprus as well as some economic problems (Hurriyet Daily News, 1997). Besides that, during the Luxembourg Summit in 1997 Greece, Germany and Luxembourg opposed Turkey's candidature for the EU (Muftuler, 2003). In addition there were also concerns among the EU member states regarding the distribution of votes in the Council of Minister as well as the number of seats in the European Parliament. This is because both criteria's are based on size of population of the member states.

The concern here was that Turkey might have the second highest population after Germany if it becomes an EU member state. It would mean that Turkey could influence the decision making in the European Union because they would have the second most number of votes in the European Parliament (Muftuler, 2003). The EU member states excluded Turkey as they wanted to make some changes to the population voting system if possible during the Nice Treaty. As a whole the Cyprus issue is once again not crucial as they were definitely other factors that hindered Turkey's EU membership application. Concerns about Turkey's population and the influence that they could have over the EU was definitely another dominant factor that made EU hesitant to grant EU membership to Turkey at that point of time.

Another important factor also during this time is when Turkey failed to live by the Copenhagen Criteria politically but they were brilliant economically as they achieved almost all the criteria. The EU Commission Progress Report in the year 2000 and 2001 demonstrated that the political aspect of the Copenhagen Criteria was one of the challenges faced by Turkey. There were still no improvements in terms of human rights although steps were taken to improve them. In addition, there was still problems related to the democratic structure of Turkey as civilian control over the government was yet to be addressed that time. As a whole, the period the between 1990 to 2004 could be concluded in a way that the Cyprus issue was crucial in Turkey's EU membership application. The Cyprus issue was only an indirectly as they had no prior say in whatever that was happening in the EU. The crucial factor here was Greece as they played a major role in the decision making process as they used the veto power to their advantage to block EU-Turkey deals.

THE CYPRUS EFFECT AFTER THE YEAR 2004

The Republic Cyprus became an EU member on 1st May 2004. The Cyprus that became an EU member is the only the southern part of Cyprus. This is because the "Annan Plan" that was presented by the United Nations did work out as expected. The "Annan Plan" received mixed reactions from the southern and northern Cyprus. The initial reactions by Turkish Cypriots are that they were not in favor of the whole plan (Suvarierol, 2003). But the Turkish Cypriots began to grow into the plan and basically started to support "Annan Plan". Civil societies in the Turkish part of Cyprus held demonstrations in support of a unified Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktas who was against unification was voted out of office in the December 2003 election (Kyris, 2012). It was for the first time in history that a pro-unification party won the election. The election results definitely showed that the Turkish Cypriots were definitely routing for unification as well a future in the EU. In general, the Turkish Cypriots approved the Annan Plan and was ready to unify their country.

However at the other side of the island in Cyprus, the Greeks Cypriots initially supported the "Annan Plan" whole heartedly without any shadow of a doubt. But elections in the 2003 changes the whole scenario when Tassos Papadopoulos became the new leader of Republic of Cyprus. The new leader was pretty much against the whole "Annan Plan" and wanted to make sure that the Greek Cypriots voted against unification of the island. Papadopoulos started to create conditions to make sure the people reject the UN Resolution Plan with the help of many political and social elites created (Anastasiou, 2007). Besides that, a few days before the referendum Papadopoulos appeared to be emotionally telling

his people through the television that the Greeks

Cypriots should reject the “Annan Plan” (Kyris, 2012). On 24th April 2004, On April 24, 2004, just a week from Cyprus’ entry into the EU, the results of the voting were out as 64.9% of the Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of the “Annan plan” and they definitely wanted unification while but in a turn of



events the Greek Cypriots rejected the “Annan Plan” 75.8% of Greek Cypriots voted against the plan (Ulosoy, 2008). As a result of this, The Republic of Cyprus remained a divided island as only the Southern part of the island entered the European Union (Basturk, 2013). This was definitely a blow to Turkey as this was the make or break decision that might have given the green light for Turkey EU membership.

The accession of only southern Cyprus into the EU definitely hampered the Turkey’s membership application into the EU. The Cyprus issue became one the major and crucial factors that affect Turkey’s negotiation process in becoming an EU member. Cyprus as an EU member now has direct power in term of veto to block Turkey from becoming an EU member. In addition, Cyprus also has the power to block any sort of deals in between Turkey and EU. The discussion over Turkey’s EU membership application started in 2005 where there needs to be a screening process for 35 chapters. Between 2005 and 2014, Turkey has completed the screening process in 33 of the chapters required for its accession while the balance of the other two chapters does not require negotiation. One of the important elements that is slowing the progress and making it difficult for the Turkish EU accession is the fact that 17 of the chapters remain blocked either by the EU or member states individually (Dagdeverenis, 2014). In the case of Turkey, delays and slow progress in discussion are mainly due to the Cyprus issue. This is because the EU Council have blocked at least 8 chapters in December 2006. This was done when Turkey refused to recognize Cyprus and to ratify the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Association Agreement by not allowing Cyprus vessels and aircrafts to use Turkey’s ports and airports (Barysch, 2010). This block by the EU Council was due to the Cyprus issue that definitely became a crucial factor for Turkey’s EU membership application after 2004 as Cyprus became a member of the EU.

In addition to the 8 chapters blocked by the EU Council, the Cyprus issue again appears as even Cyprus chose to veto at least 6 chapters that is required for Turkey’s accession into the EU (Chislett, 2015). These six chapter are related to six chapters: (1) freedom of movement for workers; (2) energy; (3) judiciary and fundamental rights; (4) justice, freedom and security; (5) education and culture; and (6) foreign, security and defense policy (Chislett, 2015). Hence this means that a total of 14 chapters are blocked due to the issue of Cyprus and this has again slowed down negotiation for the accession process for Turkey. This shows that the veto power that Cyprus received after entering EU in 2004 has now become an important tool to block and slow down Turkey’s EU membership application. In addition to that, the failure of Turkey in recognizing Cyprus as an EU member has also contributed to the slow process of Turkey’s membership into the EU which is definitely closely related to the Cyprus issue. This proves that after 2004, the Cyprus issue has def-

initely become an important and crucial factor that has impacted Turkey's EU membership application.

Besides the blocking of chapters by the EU Council and Cyprus in relation to the Cyprus issue, since becoming an EU member Cyprus has definitely become aggressive towards Turkey.

In 2014, the Greek Cypriots said that it would file a complaint to the EU leaders to block Turkey's attempts in joining the European Union (Middle East Eye, 2014). This was in response to Turkey's gas exploration expedition done in the waters claimed by Cyprus. Turkey said to have send a warship into the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to conduct seismic surveys which was definitely a threat to the safety of Cyprus. President Nicos Anastasiades said that formal complaints will also be lodged with the U.N. Division for Oceans and Law of the Sea, the International Maritime Organization and possibly with the U.N. Security Council (CNS News, 2014). This again shows that the Cyprus issue has definitely become a crucial factor because since becoming an EU member in 2004 Cyprus has been very brace and aggressive towards Turkey and are definitely making it hard for Turkey to become an EU members states.

In 2015, Cyprus showed their aggressiveness again when they pledged to block Turkey's stalled accession negotiations to join the EU. This is because Turkey has not done enough to reunite the divided island of the Republic of Cyprus. In order to restart negotiation, there needs to be a consent from all EU members (Zalan, 2015). Cypriot Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides mentioned that Cyprus is sticking to the veto for as long as Turkey doesn't live up to its obligations.

The Greek Cypriot administration threatened to block Turkey's bid until the Turkish "occupation" of northern Cyprus is ended (TRT World, 2015). This act by Cyprus again shows how far does the Cyprus issue is currently the crucial factor towards Turkey's EU membership process. The accession of Cyprus into the EU has given it power to basically rule over Turkey in their bid for an EU membership. The 14 chapters that are currently blocked and vetoed definitely shows that the Cyprus issue is a crucial factor towards Turkey's dream of being an EU member since 2004. In addition to that, Cyprus's bravery and confidence after 2004 also shows that they are not afraid of Turkey as they hold a huge advantage over them. Although there are other factors that affect Turkey's EU membership application after 2004, I would personally argue that the Cyprus issue is the most crucial factor that stands in the way of Turkey and its membership application to the EU.

IS GODOT ABOUT TO COME ?

In conclusion, the Cyprus issue was not significant or crucial in Turkey's EU membership application before it became an EU member in 2004. This is because the Cyprus issue was only an indirect factor rather than a direct factor. During the initial phase of Turkey's membership application there was more two way discussion without any external interference as it was not yet influenced by the Cyprus issue. Later on, it seemed that Greece was having a bigger say than Cyprus when talking about the EU membership application. This happened after Turkey isolated themselves for three year which paved the way for Greece to become an EU member. The Greece factor was even more crucial during this stage rather than the Cyprus factor as they were voicing out for Cyprus. Between 1990 and 2004, the Cyprus issue was once again not crucial. This is because it was the end of Cold

War and countries from Central and Western Europe were being prioritized as possible candidates. The EU wanted to unify the former communist in one community. Turkey was on sidelines as other European countries were preferred. Besides that, there were continuous pressure from Greece in terms of pin pointing Turkey human rights record as well as their military democracy. There were also other EU members states that did not favor Turkish it would become a member. One of their concern was Turkey might be able to influence the European Parliament if it entered the EU because it will have more seats in parliament due to their population. The Cyprus issue is not much of a crucial factor here during this period.

Once Cyprus became an EU member in 2004, the troubles came along for Turkey. This is because the Cyprus issue became a crucial factor that affected Turkey's EU membership directly this time. Cyprus used its veto to block 6 chapters that were important to make sure that Turkey's EU membership negotiation could take place. But due to this veto, Cyprus has basically slowed down the negotiation process. In addition, since becoming a member Cyprus have been brave to stand up to Turkey. This is because they now have the power to veto Turkey-EU membership negotiation just like they did in 2015. This was because Turkey was not taking steps to end their occupation in Northern Cyprus. It is indeed proven that the Cyprus issue only became a crucial and dominant factor after 2004 once it became an EU member. The veto power that they currently have place an important in making sure that Turkey does not become an EU member and Cyprus definitely stands in the way of Turkey's EU membership even in the future.



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TURKEY'S WORLD





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